

Advice from anonymous experienced subject leader in response to a query about how to be a subject leader from a young primary teacher just allocated the role (subject unspecified).

My starting points would be:

1. You will need a subject co-ordinator's file. This may already exist and just need updating, in which case go through it and throw out any rubbish or anything ancient. Your school may have an agreed format for how to divide this into sections. If not, ask another subject coordinator or your adviser.
2. Find out who your L.A. Subject Adviser is. The information may be on your LA website or your Head or Deputy Head may know someone who will know. Make contact with them and find out how they can support you as a new co-ordinator. There may be a termly subject coordinators network meeting in your area and/or relevant courses or they may be able to come into school to support you in getting started.
3. Spend the next term or so finding out what is already happening in school with your subject. Is there a policy? What resources are there? What is the long-term plan? What evidence is there around school that your subject is being taught? (Displays, theme days etc. Take photos as evidence) What do pupils think of your subject? Collect some examples of work. Talk to staff. Aim to do just one task per week for a set time so it doesn't become too time-consuming. You can't do everything at once, particularly if you find your subject has been rather neglected in the past.
4. Next term, meet with your head and discuss your findings. How do they see the subject developing? What did Ofsted say last time and what has been done since? What are standards like? Is there any budget for resources? (Link any discussions that may have a financial implication to improving standards and developing learning.)
5. Draw up an action plan for a) anything that needs doing before next academic year b) What can be achieved next year. Keep it manageable! Follow your action plan, keep any evidence in your subject file and demonstrate good practice in your subject in your own class. Review your plan and keep going.
6. Don't worry about the staff meetings. Whilst you are starting to lead a subject, you are not going to be expected to lead on anything. Once you have a handle on where your school is with your subject, you can identify if there are any training needs and approach your head teacher to ask for a time slot in a staff meeting.